

The Catastrophe at Frankenhausen.

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lured his misguided followers to their doom in thousands.

" Strike, strike, strike/" cried the terrible fanatic. " Do not let yourselves be moved to pity even though Esau should speak fair words to you. Regard not the lamentation of the godless." " Strike, strike, strike," he reiterated, " while the

iron is hot. Keep your swords warm with the blood of tyrants. Strike, strike, strike. God goes before you.

It is the Lord's battle, not yours. It is not you who are fighting. Therefore strike with God's help." Frenzy like

this could not supply the place of drill and organisation, as

" Thomas Miinzer with the sword of Gideon" learned to

his cost shortly after at Frankenhausen. Here on the 20th

May Thomas took post with eight thousand of his dupes to

defy the united army of the Landgrave of Hesse, Duke George

of Saxony, and Duke Henry of Brunswick, which was about

the same strength. With fanatic confidence these ill-armed

and ill-disciplined peasants awaited the onset, while Munzer

bade them look at the rainbow above as a sign of God's

presence. In this deluded spirit they refused to listen to

those who counselled submission on the promise of amnesty.

Munzer bade them remember Gideon and David, and had

two of the opposition, a nobleman and a priest, decapitated

on the spot. The rabble behind the barricade of waggons

joined in the hymn, " Nun bitten wir den Heiligen Geist"

("Now we beseech the Holy Ghost"), and looked upwards

for the army of angels to rend the heavens and

descend to
their help. Whilst thus engaged the landgrave's
men-at-arms
came crash over the rustic stockade, and in a
twinkling the
army of God's elect was a horde of fugitives,
among whom
the spears and swords of trained soldiers did
fearful execution.
Thousands were shot, hacked, or speared. The
streets of
Frankenhausen, where many sought refuge, were
soaked with
blood. " We have taken Erankenhausen," wrote
Landgraf
Philip the following day, "stabbed to death all
the male
prisoners found there, and plundered the town,
and with the
help of God obtained a victory for which we have
cause to be
very thankful to the Almighty, and we hope in
this to have
accomplished a good work." It was a grim work
at any rate,
Graf Philip. Among the few prisoners spared was
Munzer
himself, who was caught in the loft where he
had sought
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